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BROADCASTERS' VICTORY COUNCIL

MUNSEY BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D. C.

EXECUTIVE 2113

February 18, 1942

Number 3

WHAT WE ARE - AND WHAT WE AREN'T **

There is, it appears, a certain amount of misunderstanding in the radio industry about the fundamental purpose of the Broadcasters Victory Council. The BVC is an emergency organization designed to provide a much-needed ball-bearing between the numerous government agencies and the business of broadcasting.

In this capacity, it has no intent to negotiate, intercede, arbitrate, or meddle in any industry problems that are not direct outgrowths of the situation in Washington. The Council can not go into labor disputes, music agreements, rate structures, and the hundred-and-two other worries which broadcasting has always had to face. To all these have been added today the problems of censorship, the demands of government agencies, and the mounting necessity for super-charged public service. Such things alone - and they present a formidable front - are the full-time concern of the Broadcasters Victory Council.

MORE CO-OPERATION WITH THE OFF **

The OFF has just appointed two new committees, designed to work with its Radio Division. The first of these, which includes production and idea men from both networks and agencies, comprises:

Advertising Agency representatives:-

A. K. Spencer of J. Walter Thompson Company
Heagen Bayles of Ruthrauff & Ryan, Inc.
John G. Hynes of Lord & Thomas
John A. Carter of Pedlar & Ryan
Arthur Pryor of Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn
Frederick W. Wile, Jr. of Young & Rubicam
R. J. Scott of Schwimmer & Scott
Kirby Hawkes of Benton & Bowles

Network representatives:-

Charles Vanda of the Columbia Broadcasting System
Madeline Ensign of the Mutual Broadcasting Company
C. L. Menser of the National Broadcasting Company
Charles Barry of the Blue Network

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings. It suggests that the results have significant implications for the field of study and may lead to further research in this area.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes the study. It summarizes the main findings and provides a final statement on the importance of the research.

O. F. F. representatives:-

William Lewis
Frank Stanton
Philip Cohen
Douglas Meservey

These gentlemen have their first session with the OFF on Tuesday (February 17).

Committee No. 2 is to represent the stations themselves. Its membership:- John Shepard, 3rd, Boston; George B. Storer, Detroit; James D. Shouse, Cincinnati; John E. Fetzer, Kalamazoo; and Eugene C. Pulliam, Indianapolis. All of these men are members of the Broadcasters Victory Council. The group gets together for its first OFF meeting on Friday (February 20).

A number of topics calling for radio-government co-operation are in view, and these will be studied thoroughly in conferences between the new committees and the OFF's Radio Division. Foremost, of course, is a matter that today ranks as one of Washington's prime headaches - the shortage of rubber supplies. The future holds strong promise of a conservation drive, to be pushed home by radio, and planned to educate the public on innumerable ways to save rubber, not only in tires, but other non-essential items. Collection round-ups may even be organized to boost the nation's stocks of reclaimed rubber.

TWO SPECIALS **

A request is made urging that all stations stress the universal term "Eastern War Time", "Central War Time" and so on (depending on the zone) in any announcement dealing with what the clock says. This procedure, of course, has already been instituted by major networks.

Another point is the need for more good taste in scheduling announcements, commercial or otherwise, that may proceed or follow talks of national interest by such persons as President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, et al. The danger lurking therein is that such addresses are sometimes booked into program schedules unexpectedly. It will pay to take a minute or more and check over traffic sheets, thus insuring that announcements fore and aft of such talks are not likely to create unfavorable comment. In general, the rules for handling important news broadcasts also apply here.

MORE ABOUT INTERVIEW SHOWS **

In the first two BVC newsletters we told you that the Office of Censorship has taken under advisement the possible authorization of man-on-the-street broadcasts, if the interview circumstances are adequately controlled.

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Here, we think, is the way the subject now shapes up. We understand that the Office of Censorship will grant permission to individual applicants, providing they guarantee the strict maintenance of certain safeguards. Application should be made in writing to J. Harold Ryan, Assistant Director of Censorship, at Washington.

Letters should outline these basic conditions:

The broadcaster will maintain complete control over all persons allowed access to the microphone, and the master of ceremonies shall be fully conversant with the Wartime Code.

Participants will be selected in advance from the membership of accredited clubs, civic organizations, or educational institutions.

Precautions will be taken to see that unauthorized persons are excluded from the microphone through the use of an assistant to the M.C.

Interviewees will be invited far enough in advance of the broadcast to allow presentation of proper credentials to the announcer or master of ceremonies.

The master of ceremonies shall be equipped with a device for instantaneously cutting off the program if necessary.

The program will be transcribed and broadcast at a later time or day so it may be thoroughly checked by the production department before going on the air.

If you write the Office of Censorship on this matter and do secure its permission to proceed on the basis of such safeguards, too much stress can not be placed on the need for living up to your promised caution. One slip by a single station, and the entire privilege can be revoked, to the detriment - both in reputation and finances - of the entire industry.

CHECK STRANGE SPONSORS **

Along these same lines, we drop a warning that may seem all too superfluous. But this is war, and every eventuality must have barriers set up against it. Never accept a commercial from an unknown individual who comes into your station, pays down cash, and wants his announcement put on the air as soon as possible.

Any actual occurrence of this type would probably be more subtle than the blunt way we've stated it. The individual might introduce himself, for example, as the new advertising manager at the Jones Department Store. "We're having a rush sale of umbrellas," he might say, "and we want to get this plug on the air before it stops raining." Maybe the Jones Department Store has been a spasmodic advertiser. Maybe you're anxious to get more business from it, and decide to oblige this new advertising manager.

A simple telephone call, however, a quick bit of checking, and then you can be sure it's all on the up-and-up. Never accept business from an unknown firm until you've checked and found that it's authentic. And, even more important, be sure that your personnel understands this. Broadcasting's travelling a trail these days where the foot has only to slip once.

YOU CAN'T BE TOO SURE **

Sometimes there's more pride than sense apparent in the way that stations assume the responsibilities imposed by their appointment as a "key station" for local Interceptor Command work. The fact is supposed to be confidential, which carries no obligations to shout it from rooftops. This week the NAB revealed that the War Department has received several complaints that some stations are using their designation as a "key" to prove superiority over competitors.

We quote the Commission's original order on the subject: "No station licensee will be permitted to make use of these instructions or of its station designation as a 'key station' or otherwise for its own uses. In other words, no advertising, announcement or sales representations shall include any reference to the instructions or to a station's activities in carrying out the instructions."

ENGINEERS ARE ESSENTIAL **

There are probably very few broadcast stations in the land that haven't already felt the pinch of Selective Service, quietly absorbing engineers, announcers and general personnel. The shortage of broadcast engineers, of course, has become alarmingly acute.

Now, it develops, the Defense Communications Board has asked the Selective Service System and its head, Brig. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, to consider deferment, where justified, of broadcasting technicians in particular, and even the deferment of other technical employees of the communications industry in cases where replacement cannot be made without considerable delay and training.

The request stems from surveys and reports prepared by representatives of the broadcasting industry, and has the approval of the DCB Industry and Labor Advisory Committees. Selective Service officials have already been advised that, in the case of broadcasting technicians, at least nine to ten months is needed for adequate training of replacements. Temporary deferments would greatly ease the problem, and it is contended that regulations promulgated by the government on replacements should equally be applied to such essential industries as broadcasting. It will be recalled that the movie industry recently secured deferments for its top technicians.

BY WAY OF COMMENT **

To reach you sooner with word of latest developments from the Washington radio front, this weekly BVC newsletter will henceforth be mailed a day earlier than originally planned. Next week, of course, George Washington's birthday tends to hold things up a little, but after that you may count on finding this BVC newsletter in your mail at least one day earlier than before. We'll appreciate your comments, incidentally.

FOR YOUR SUPPORT - THANKS **

The honor - and we consider it a sizable one - of first and fully responding to the plea of the Broadcasters Victory Council for industry support goes to Edward A. Allen, president of WLVA in Lynchburg, Va., whose contribution to the liaison work that the BVC is doing arrived promptly last week. Well-known in radio, Ed Allen is only one of the many who thus recognize the imperative need for the BVC.

Our thanks go not only to him but to many others who have similarly acknowledged the Council's solicitations. The wherewithal to do our work is coming in well. With it comes an increasing obligation to see that radio not only keeps clear of busy official toes, but goes confidently beyond that to perform a job worthy of the great part it can and must play in the national war effort.

LATEST FLASH **

Neville Miller, president of NAB, has been added to the OFF station committee reported on page 2.

RADIO'S MANY APPEALS **

These are days when the public is asked to contribute and support a galaxy of causes - almost all vital, but unfortunately confusing in their variety and frequency. An evening's cross-slice of radio pleas may include everything from the Red Cross and the Treasury Department to a request for the saving of old tooth paste containers. The result, alas, is a tendency to weaken the force of individual pleas, simply because there are so many of them.

Cognizant of this situation, the Office of Facts and Figures propose to co-relate all these different drives and campaigns, letting each one hit home with the greatest possible impact. Shortly after March 1, we hope, individual weeks are to be set aside for different drives.

You doubtless received the NAB War Service Bulletin Number 9, regarding the Army Emergency Fund Campaign. You probably also received through your press service notice that this appeal for funds of the AEF was not to be made at this time. It is our understanding the Army is going to ask for announcements regarding the object of this fund.

Some sentiments at Washington seem to feel that the Army Emergency Fund should best be financed with a grant from Congress. Further developments can be anticipated soon.

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